GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:773
ANSWERED ON:20.07.2017
Funds for Rural Water Supply
Tharoor Dr. Shashi

Will the Minister of DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether according to the 23rd report of the Standing Committee of Rural Development, 3042 lakh habitations are receiving inadequate drinking water and 59,881 habitations where quality of drinking water is affected with water contaminants like Arsenic, Fluoride, Iron etc;
(b) if so, whether the Government is considering increasing the funds for rural drinking water to achieve the set targets and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
(c) whether the Government is aware that habitations receiving contaminated water are either suffering from or are at risk of diseases such as skin cancer, skeletal fluorosis, renal failures etc.; and
(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION
(SHRI RAMESH CHANDAPPA JIGAJINAGI)
(a) As per 23rd report of the Standing Committee of Rural Development, there are 59,881 habitations where quality of drinking water is affected with water contaminants like Arsenic, Fluoride, Iron etc. and 3.42 lakh habitations are Partially Covered i.e. getting less than the norm of 40 litre per capita per day (lpcd) of safe drinking water.
(b) Funds under National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) are released to States based on pre-approved criteria as outlined under NRDWP guideline for providing safe drinking water in rural areas. Funds under NRDWP has been increased from Rs. 4373 crore in 2015-16 to Rs. 6000 crore in 2016-17 and Rs. 6050 crore in 2017-18. As per the recommendation of 14th Finance Commission, there has been an enhanced devolution of funds to the States from 32% to 42%, part of which can be used in strengthening the rural drinking water supply. Further, there is also direct funding of substantial amount to rural local bodies for various basic services including water supply. The states have also been advised to pool more funds from their own resources.
(c) to (d) Yes Government is aware that habitations receiving contaminated water are either suffering from or are at risk of diseases such as skin cancer, skeletal fluorosis, renal failures etc. Disease surveillance is not the mandate of this Ministry.
Rural drinking water supply is a State subject. The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation assists the States technically and financially in providing safe drinking water through the centrally sponsored National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP). Up to 67% of funds provided to the States under NRDWP can be utilized for coverage and tackling water quality problems with priority to arsenic and fluoride affected habitation. Further, 5% of the NRDWP funds are earmarked for Water Quality and allocated to those States with habitations affected by excess chemical contamination and with high priority districts affected by Japanese Encephalitis/Acute Encephalitis Syndrome.It is the State Governments who plan, design, approve, execute and operate & maintain the schemes for providing safe drinking water.
The Ministry has informed all the States to commission surface water based piped water supply schemes in all water quality affected habitations as a long term sustainable solution. However, since commissioning of Piped Water Supply projects may take 3-5 years and the rural people cannot be put to risk of consuming contaminated water during this period, all States have been advised to install community water purification plants. This is being done as a short term immediate measure for providing 8-10 lpcd (litre per capita per day) of safe water for drinking and cooking purpose only. On recommendation of NITI Aayog, the Government of India had released Rs 800 crore in March' 2016 to provide community water purification plants in all remaining arsenic and fluoride affected habitations. In addition, funds to the tune of Rs.100 Crore each are also provided for tackling arsenic and fluoride problems in West Bengal and Rajasthan respectively for the last mile connectivity in commissioning surface water based piped water supply schemes.
In addition to this, the Ministry has launched a National Water Quality Sub-Mission on 22nd March 2017 to provide safe drinking water to arsenic / fluoride affected habitations. During February / March 2017 under National Water Quality Sub-Mission funds to an amount of Rs. 814.14 Crore has been released to 15 States to complete ongoing schemes.